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SUGHRUE MION, PLLC

January 10, 2002

BOX PCT

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

PCT/JP00/04710
-filed July 13, 2000

Re: Application of Satoshi ARAMAKI
CASE
Assignee: **FUJI PHOTO FILM CO., LTD.**
Our Ref: Q66240

Dear Sir:

The following documents and fees are submitted herewith in connection with the above application for the purpose of entering the National stage under 35 U.S.C. § 371 and in accordance with Chapter II of the Patent Cooperation Treaty:

- ☒ an executed Declaration and Power of Attorney.
- ☒ an English translation of the International Application.
- ☒ 5 sheets of drawings.
- ☒ Preliminary Amendment (drawings)
- ☒ an executed Assignment and PTO 1595 form.
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement, PTO 1449 form and an office action citing each reference.

It is assumed that copies of the International Application, the International Search Report, the International Preliminary Examination Report, and any Articles 19 and 34 amendments as required by § 371(c) will be supplied directly by the International Bureau, but if further copies are needed, the undersigned can easily provide them upon request.

The Government filing fee is calculated as follows:

Total claims	<u>6</u>	-	20	=		x	\$18.00	=	<u>\$0.00</u>
Independent claims	<u>1</u>	-	3	=		x	\$84.00	=	<u>\$0.00</u>
Base Fee									<u>\$890.00</u>

TOTAL FILING FEE	<u>\$890.00</u>
Recordation of Assignment	<u>\$ 40.00</u>
TOTAL FEE	<u>\$930.00</u>

Checks for the statutory filing fee of \$890.00 and Assignment recordation fee of \$40.00 are attached. You are also directed and authorized to charge or credit any difference or overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16, 1.17 and 1.492 which may be required during the entire



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Q66240

2 of 2

pendency of the application to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. A duplicate copy of this transmittal letter is attached.

Priority is claimed from:

Country

Application No

Filing Date

Japan

11-203279

July 16, 1999

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: January 10, 2002

Paul & Mike Reg. 33,102
for Darryl Mexic
Registration No. 23,063

20020110-011002

PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of:

Satoshi ARAMAKI

Appln. No.: Not yet assigned

Group Art Unit: Not yet assigned

For: CASE

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT INCLUDING REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF
PROPOSED DRAWING CORRECTIONS**

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Submitted herewith with the application, please find a proposed drawing correction to Figure 5, with the changes indicated in red ink. Applicant notes that the drawing corrections rectify obvious errors as defined by PCT Rule 91, and introduce no new matter into the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge receipt of the drawing corrections and approve the changes.

Respectfully submitted,

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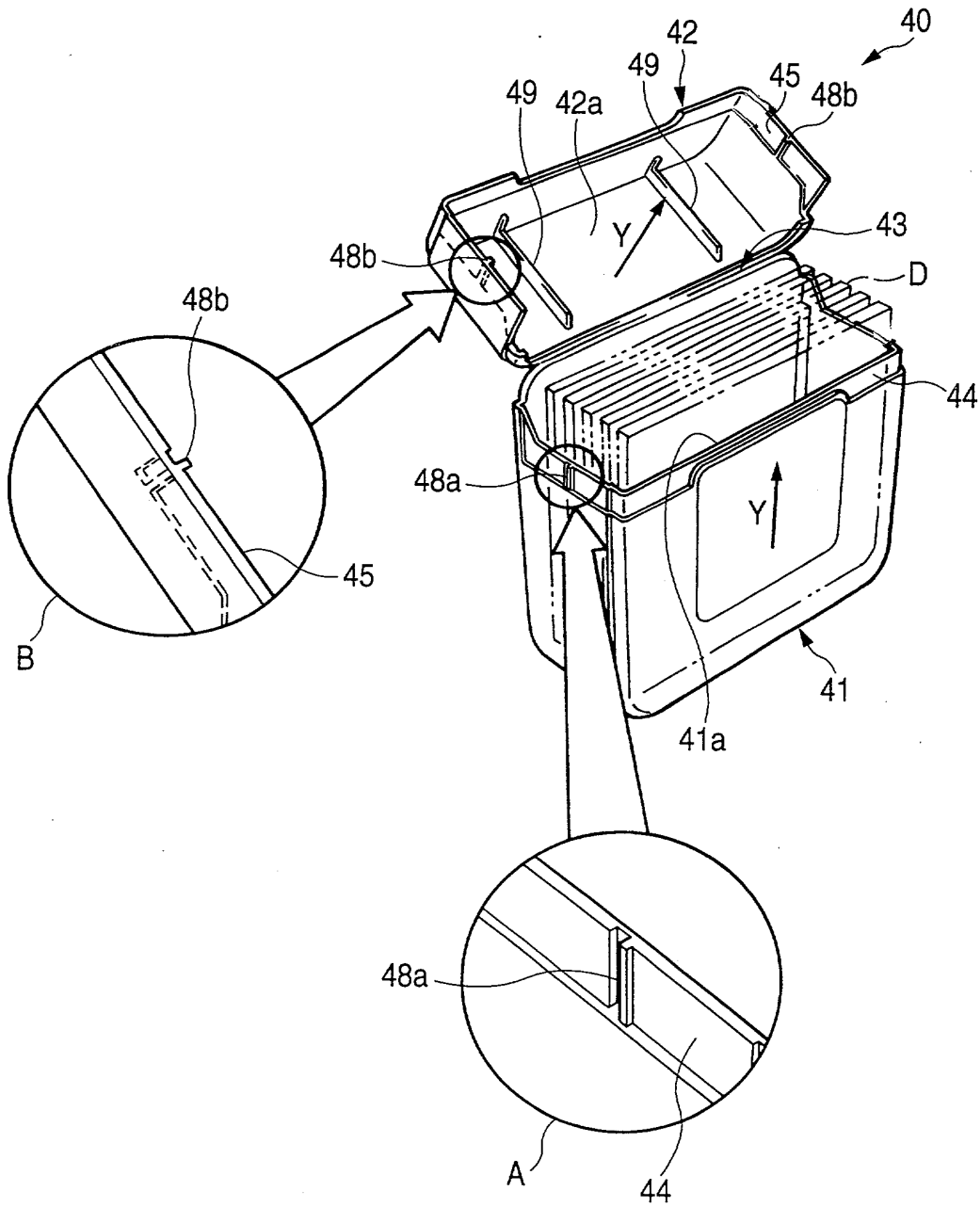
Paul D. Zinn Reg. 33,102
for Darryl Mexic
Registration No. 23,063

Date: January 10, 2002

Proposed Drawing Corrections

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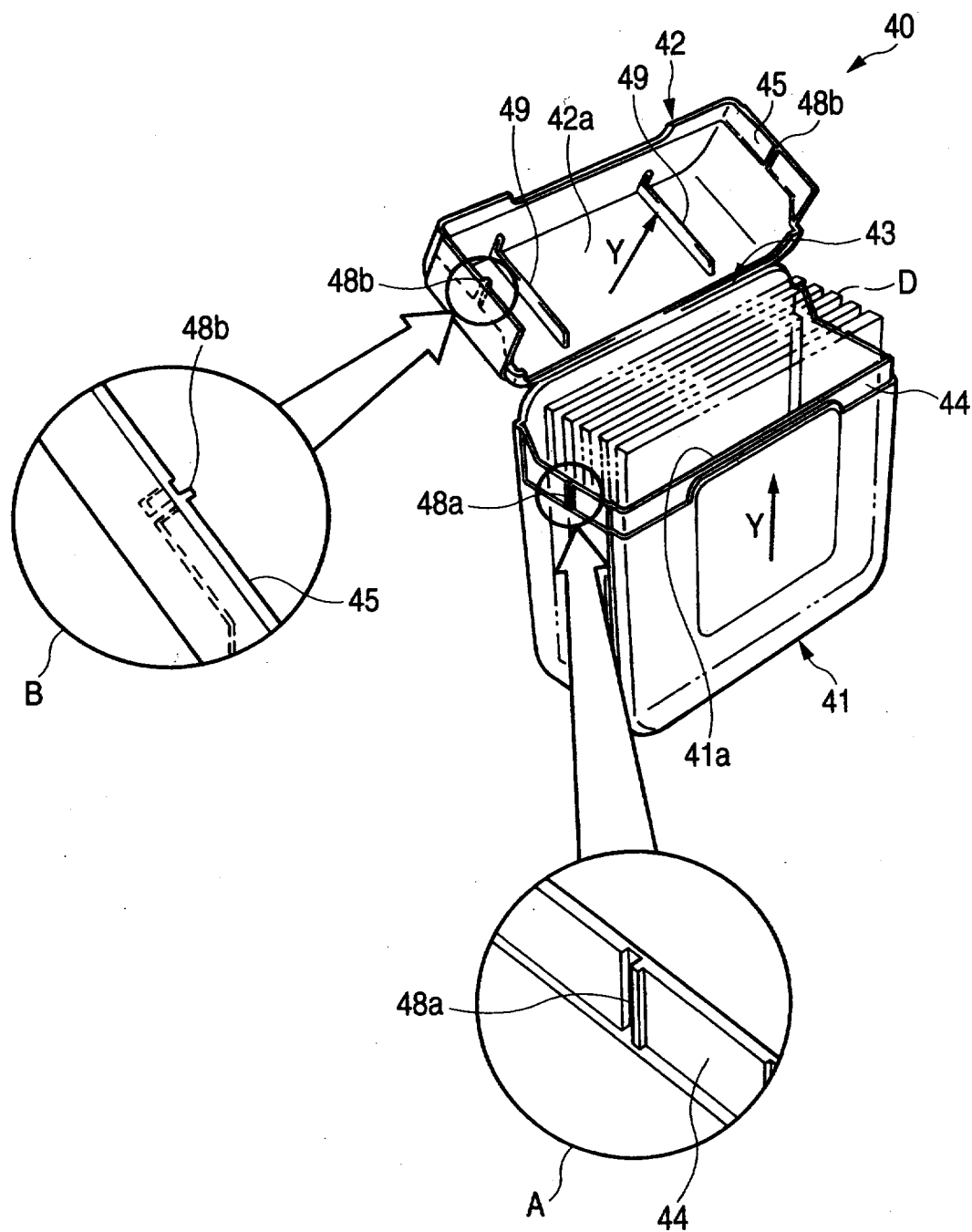
FIG. 5



2007-01-01

5/5

FIG. 5



5/pvls

SPECIFICATION

CASE

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a case, particularly to a case for recording medium, and more particularly to a case for disk cartridges for containing the disk cartridges such as MD, FD, MO, and so on.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

There has been conventionally known a case for a magnetic tape cassette as shown in Fig. 4, which contains the magnetic tape cassette.

This case 30 for the magnetic tape cassette includes a containing part 31 adapted to contain a magnetic tape cassette C, and a lid part 32 which is provided on the containing part 31 via a hinge part 33.

20 The containing part 31 is provided with an extended portion 31c and side walls 34 on three sides which surround a flat plate area 31b and are not in contact with the hinge part 33. The lid part 32 is provided with side walls 35 on three sides which surround a flat plate area 32b and are not in contact with the hinge part 33. The
25 containing part 31 and the lid part 32 are connected by

means of the hinge part 33 which has thin walled grooves 36a, 36b on both sides of a flat plate area 33b thereof.

An opening 31a of the containing part 31 is covered with the lid part 32 which is adapted to be freely opened and closed, and thus, the magnetic tape cassettes C which has been contained in the containing part 31 can be stored.

Meanwhile, the containing part 31 of this case 30 for the magnetic tape cassette has V-shaped engaging recesses 37a formed in middle areas of both the left and right side walls 34 adjacent to their base sides, and locking portions 38a in a shape of groove formed in the middle areas of both the left and right side walls 34 adjacent to their front sides.

On the other hand, the lid part 32 has rod-like engaging projections 37b at inner faces in middle areas of both the left and right side walls 35 adjacent to their base sides, and locking portions 38b in a shape of projection formed on outer faces in the middle areas of both the left and right side walls 35 adjacent to their front sides.

And, the lid part 32 has been closed, the engaging recesses 37a are engaged with the engaging projections 37b, while the locking portions 38a are engaged with the locking portions 38b so as to lock the lid part 32.

Lock holding force of the lid part 32 can be made

sufficient through the engagement between the engaging recesses 37a and the engaging projections 37b, and the engagement between the locking portions 38a and the locking portions 38b.

5 However, in order to obtain sufficient lock holding force of the lid part 32, a locking mechanism must be of such a structure as making undercuts inevitably. In other words, the depressions and the projections of the locking portions 38a, 38b must be in such shapes that they cannot
10 be released in a direction Y in which molds are opened.

As the results, there has been a problem that on occasion of molding, sliding cores which are adapted to move in different directions from the direction Y in which the molds are opened must be employed, and manufacturing
15 process will be complicated.

Therefore, in order to solve such a problem, there has been proposed a case for disk cartridges as shown in Fig. 5.

20 This case 40 for disk cartridges includes a containing part 41 adapted to contain a plurality of disk cartridges D, and a lid part 42 provided on an opening 41a of the containing part 41 via a hinge part 43.

25 The containing part 41 is composed of a deep container, and provided with an outer stepped portion 44 having a thin wall thickness at an open edge of the

opening 41a. On the other hand, the lid part 42 is provided with an inner stepped portion 45 having a thin wall thickness at an open edge of the opening 42a so that the outer stepped portion 44 of the containing part 41 and the inner stepped portion 45 of the lid part 42 may be engaged with each other.

There are also provided, in substantially middle areas of both side faces of the outer stepped portion 44, locking portions 48a (shown in an enlarged view A of an essential part) having a shape of depression and projection along a direction of a vertical axis (same as the direction Y in which the molds are opened). Meanwhile, there are provided, in substantially middle areas of both inner side faces of the inner stepped portion 45, locking portions 48b (shown in an enlarged view B of an essential part) having a shape of depression and projection along the direction of the vertical axis (also the same as the direction Y in which the molds are opened).

When the lid part 42 has been closed, the locking portions 48a of the containing part 41 are engaged with the locking portions 48b of the lid part 42 so as to lock the lid part 42. There are further formed, at an inner face of a ceiling of the lid part 42, projecting ribs 49 which project in a back and forth direction of the lid part at left and right sides of its central area, to

increase mechanical strength of the lid part 42.

In the case 40 for disk cartridges having such a structure, all of the locking portions 48a, 48b of the lock mechanism have the shape of depression and projection along the direction of the vertical axis. This means that they have the shape of depression and projection which is open in the direction Y in which the molds are opened. Accordingly, it has become possible to mold the case without employing the sliding cores which are adapted to move on occasion of molding, and the production will become easy.

However, since the locking portions 48a, 48b of this lock mechanism are provided in the substantially middle areas of both the side faces of the openings 41a, 42a, and in the stepped portions 44, 45 of the open edges which have thin wall thickness, they are easily flexed, and because of the flexure, the lock tends to be disengaged. In addition, in the engagement between the locking portions 48a and the locking portions 48b, the depressions and the projections of both the locking portions tend to be engaged in their end areas only.

For this reason, it has been impossible for the lock mechanism of the lid part 42 to obtain sufficient lock holding force required for practical use.

The invention has been made in view of the above described circumstances, and it is an object of the invention to provide a case which can be simply manufactured, and can obtain sufficient lock holding force
5 required for practical use.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

In order to attain the above described object, the case according to the invention includes a containing part adapted to contain objects to be contained, and a lid part which is provided on an opening of the containing part via a hinge part and adapted to be freely opened and closed, and the case is characterized in that in areas
10 near corners of both side faces of the opening of the containing part and an opening of the lid part, there are provided at least one locking portions which are respectively adapted to be engaged with each other.
15

Herein, the area near the corner means a range within one fourth of a width of each of the side faces of the case, and in case of a case for MD as shown in an
20 embodiment as described below, specifically means a range of 0mm to 7mm from the corner. The range of the area may be appropriately modified according to requisites such as material of the case , shapes of the locking portions, and
25 in case of other embodiments besides the case for MD, the

range may be appropriately modified.

The locking portions may be composed of a shape of depression and projection and a shape of projection and depression which are adapted to be engaged with each other.

5 Alternatively, the locking portions may be composed of a depression and a projection which are adapted to be engaged with each other, or a projection and a depression which are adapted to be engaged with each other.

10 The locking portions may be provided in the areas near the corners at a front side, and in addition, in substantially middle areas of both the side faces of the openings of the containing part and the lid part, or in areas near corners at a back side.

15 In this case, the locking portions for locking the lid part are provided in the areas near the corners of both the openings of the containing part and the lid part, that is to say, in the places which are hard to be deformed and strong in strength. For this reason, the lock is not likely to be disengaged, and the necessary lock
20 holding force required for practical use can be sufficiently obtained.

25 Further, because the sufficient lock holding force can be obtained, the lock mechanism need not be made in an undercut shape, and the production will be simplified, without employing the sliding cores.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a case for disk cartridges in one embodiment according to the invention in a state where a lid part is open.

Fig. 2 is an enlarged sectional view of locking portions of the case for disk cartridges in this embodiment.

Fig. 3 is an enlarged sectional view of locking portions of a case for disk cartridges in a conventional example.

Fig. 4 is a perspective view of a case for a magnetic tape cassette in a conventional example in a state where a lid part is open.

Fig. 5 is a perspective view of the case for disk cartridges in the conventional example in a state where a lid part is open.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

The invention aims to solve the above described problems.

Now, one embodiment according to the invention will be described in further detail referring to the drawings. The same structure as the conventional case for disk cartridges as shown in Fig. 5 will be described in a

simplified manner.

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the case for disk cartridges of the one embodiment according to the invention in a state where a lid part is open.

5 A case 10 for disk cartridges in this embodiment includes as main components similarly to the conventional case, a containing part 1 adapted to contain disk cartridges D as objects to be contained, and a lid part 2 which is provided on the containing part 1 via a hinge part 3.

10 The containing part 1 is composed of a deep container, and can contain five mini disks (MD) D. The lid part 2 composed of a shallow lid is connected to an opening 1a of the containing part 1 by means of the hinge part 3 having a thin walled groove 3a.

15 The containing part 1 is provided with an outer stepped portion 4 having a thin wall thickness at an open edge of the opening 1a. On the other hand, the lid part 2 is provided with an inner stepped portion 5 having a thin wall thickness at an open edge of the opening 2a so that
20 the outer stepped portion 4 of the containing part 1 and the inner stepped portion 5 of the lid part 2 are engaged with each other when the lid part 2 is closed.

25 In areas near both corners c at front sides of the outer stepped portion 4, there are provided locking

portions 6a having a shape of depression and projection along a direction of a vertical axis (same as a direction Y in which the molds are opened) as shown in an enlarged view A of an essential part of Fig. 1. On the other hand, in areas near both corners c at front sides of the outer stepped portion 5, there are provided locking portions 6b having a shape of depression and projection along the direction of the vertical axis (the direction Y) as shown in an enlarged view B of an essential part of Fig. 1.

In substantially middle areas of both the side faces of the outer stepped portion 4, there are provided locking portions 7a having a shape of depression and projection also along the direction of the vertical axis, and in substantially middle areas of both inner side faces of the inner stepped portion 5, there are provided locking portions 7b having a shape of depression and projection also along the direction of the vertical axis.

Ridgelines of these locking portions 6a, 6b and the locking portions 7a, 7b having the shape of depression and projection are rounded at a radius of about 0.1mm to 0.2mm.

When the lid part has been closed, the locking portion 6b is engaged with the locking portion 6a, and at the same time, the locking portion 7b is engaged with the locking portion 7a so as to lock the lid part 2.

Moreover, on an inner face of a ceiling of the lid

part 2, there are formed projecting ribs 9 in order to increase mechanical strength of the lid part 2.

Then, operation of the case for disk cartridges in this embodiment will be described.

5 In this case 10 for disk cartridges, since a pair of the locking portions 6a, 6b are provided in the areas near the corners c of both the openings 1a, 2a of the containing part 1 and the lid part 2, the locking portions 6a, 6b are located in the areas which are hard to be deformed. In short, they are provided at such places as being hardly flexible and strong in strength. Accordingly, the lock is not likely to be disengaged, and sufficient lock holding force of the lid part 2 as required for practical use can be obtained.

10 5 Because the sufficient lock holding force can be obtained, there will be no need of making the lock mechanism of the lid part 2 in an undercut shape, and the production will be simplified. In other words, the lock mechanism of the lid part 2 has a shape of being undercut
20 free to be opened in a direction in which the molds are opened on occasion of integral injection molding of the case for disk cartridges, and thus, the production will be simplified.

25 By providing a pair of the locking portions 7a, 7b in the substantially middle areas of both the side faces

of the openings 1a, 2a in parallel to the locking portions 6a, 6b, the lock holding force will be more or less strengthened. However, the provision of the pair of the locking portions 7a, 7b is not necessarily required, because only a pair of the locking portions 6a, 6b are sufficient. Although these locking portions 7a, 7b are not necessarily required for the lock, they act as positioning guides for the lid part 2 when the lid part 2 is closed, and serve to enable the locking portions 6a, 6b to be engaged accurately.

Further, the ridgelines of the locking portions 6a, 6b and the locking portions 7a, 7b having the shape of depression and projection are rounded. Therefore, since the locking portions 6a, 6b and the locking portions 7a, 7b having the shape of depression and projection are not square-cornered, the holding force of the lid part 2 will not be abruptly deteriorated because of abrasion of the locking portions. Still further, provided that the locking portions 6a, 6b and the locking portions 7a, 7b have been rounded from the beginning, their action as the positioning guides will be enhanced, thus ensuring smooth opening and closing operation of the lid part 2.

Although only one embodiment of the invention has been described above, the invention is not limited to the above described embodiment, but can be modified and

improved appropriately. For example, this case is not only applied to the case for disk cartridges but can be applied to cases for various objects to be contained. Although in this embodiment, one pair of the locking portions are provided in the areas near the corner of the openings, and the other pair of the locking portions are provided in the substantially middle areas of both the side faces of the openings, the one pair of the locking portions may be provided only in the areas near the corners of the openings.

Furthermore, the pair of the locking portions are composed of the shape of depression and projection and the shape of projection and depression to be engaged with each other in this embodiment. However, they may be composed of a depression and a projection to be engaged with each other, or a projection and a depression to be engaged with each other.

EXAMPLE

Now, a specific example of the case for disk cartridges according to the invention will be described to clarify effects of the invention.

Fig. 2 is an enlarged sectional view showing a pair of the locking portions which are provided in the areas near the corners of the case. The case 10 for disk

cartridges has been integrally molded by injection molding, employing resin of PP (polypropylene) as material.

Specific values of sizes of the locking portions 6a, 6b of the containing part 1 are as follows;

5 The positions where the locking portions 6a, 6b of the containing part 1 are provided are the areas near the corners c, and at 3.8mm apart from a front face of the case toward a back face of the case.

10 The locking portion 6a of the containing part 1 has a standard thickness $t1 = 0.68$, a width of the depression $v1 = 1.00$, a depth of the depression $d1 = 0.45$, a width of the projection $w1 = 0.60$, and a height of the projection $h1 = 0.45$. Meanwhile, the locking portion 6b of the lid part 2 has a standard thickness $t2 = 0.76$, a width of the projection $w2 = 0.60$, a height of the projection $h2 = 0.40$, a width of the depression $v2 = 1.00$, and a depth of the depression $d2 = 0.45$. The values are in millimeters (mm).

15 The ridgelines of the depression and the projection of the locking portions 6a, 6b are rounded at a radius of about 0.1mm to 0.2mm.

20 Fig. 3 is an enlarged sectional view showing a pair of the locking portions which are provided in the substantially middle areas of both the side faces of the case in a specific example of a conventional case for disk cartridges. Fig. 3(L) shows a left side of the case, and

Fig. 3(R) shows a right side of the case.

The conventional case 40 for disk cartridges has been also integrally molded by injection molding, employing resin of PP (polypropylene) as material.

The specific values of sizes of the locking portions 48a, 48b of the case 40 are as follows;

Left side of the case

The locking portion 48a of the containing part 41 has a standard thickness $t_1 = 0.69$, a width of the depression $v_1 = 1.00$, a depth of the depression $d_1 = 0.42$, a width of the projection $w_1 = 0.59$, and a height of the projection $h_1 = 0.31$.

Meanwhile, the locking portion 48b of the lid part 42 has a standard thickness $t_2 = 0.76$, a width of the projection $w_2 = 0.88$, a height of the projection $h_2 = 0.45$, a width of the depression $v_2 = 0.97$, and a depth of the depression $d_2 = 0.19$. The values are in millimeters (mm).

Right side of the case

The locking portion 48a of the containing part 41 has a standard thickness $t_1 = 0.66$, a width of the depression $v_1 = 0.98$, a depth of the depression $d_1 = 0.44$, a width of the projection $w_1 = 0.59$, and a height of the projection $h_1 = 0.31$.

Meanwhile, the locking portion 48b of the lid part 42 has a standard thickness $t_2 = 0.78$, a width of the projection $w_2 = 0.84$, a height of the projection $h_2 = 0.41$, a width of the depression $v_2 = 0.93$, and a depth of the depression $d_2 = 0.61$. The values are in millimeters (mm).

It is to be noted that the case 10 for disk cartridges as described above is provided with the pair of the locking portions 7a, 7b having similar sizes to the conventional case, in the substantially middle areas of both the side faces of the case.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE INSTANT EXAMPLE AND THE CONVENTIONAL EXAMPLE

In case of the conventional example in which the locking portions 48a, 48b are provided only in the substantially middle areas of the side faces of the openings 41a, 42a, when the case 40 has been pulled by a tension gauge, the lid part 42 has been opened with a force within a range of 180g to 300g. After opening and closing operations of the lid part 42 have been repeated several ten times, the force may be lowered to 150g. This is attributed to a sudden drop of the locking force resulting from abrasion of the ridgelines of the depression and projection shapes of the locking portions 48a, 48b because they are not rounded.

In contrast, in case of the instant example in which the locking portions 6a, 6b are provided in the areas near the corners of the openings 1a, 2a (The other locking portions 7a, 7b are provided in the substantially middle areas of both the side faces), when the case has been pulled by the tension gauge, the locking force has been about 440g or more at the beginning, has decreased to 380g after 500 times of the opening and closing operations, and the locking force of 320g has been still maintained after about 1000 times of the opening and closing operations.

For reference, five sheets of the disks weigh about 90g, and a standard lock holding force is set to be about 250g from experience. Therefore, the necessary lock holding force can be ensured within a range of usual number of times of the opening and closing operations in this embodiment.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

As described in detail herein above, according to the invention, there are provided at least one pair of the locking portions for locking the lid part in the areas near the corners of both the side faces of the openings of both the containing part and the lid part. Accordingly, the locking portions are provided in the places which have high strength and are hardly flexible, and for this reason,

the necessary lock holding force required for practical use can be sufficiently obtained.

Further, because the sufficient locking force can be obtained, the lock mechanism need not be made in an undercut shape. Therefore, the production without employing sliding cores has become possible and the manufacturing process can be simplified.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A case comprising a containing part adapted to contain objects to be contained, and a lid part which is provided on an opening of said containing part via a hinge part and adapted to be freely opened and closed,

characterized in that in areas near corners of both side faces of said opening of said containing part and an opening of said lid part, there are provided at least one locking portions which are respectively adapted to be engaged with each other.

2. A case as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that said area near said corner is one fourth or less of a width of each of side faces of said case from a front face.

3. A case as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that said locking portions comprise a shape of depression and projection and a shape of projection and depression which are adapted to be engaged with each other.

4. A case as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that said locking portions comprise a depression and a projection which are adapted to be engaged with each other, or a projection and a depression which are adapted to be

engaged with each other.

5 5. A case as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that said locking portions are provided in areas near corners at a front side, and in substantially middle areas of both said side faces of said openings of said containing part and said lid part, or in areas near corners at a back side.

10 6. A case as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that said locking portions are in a shape of being undercut free.

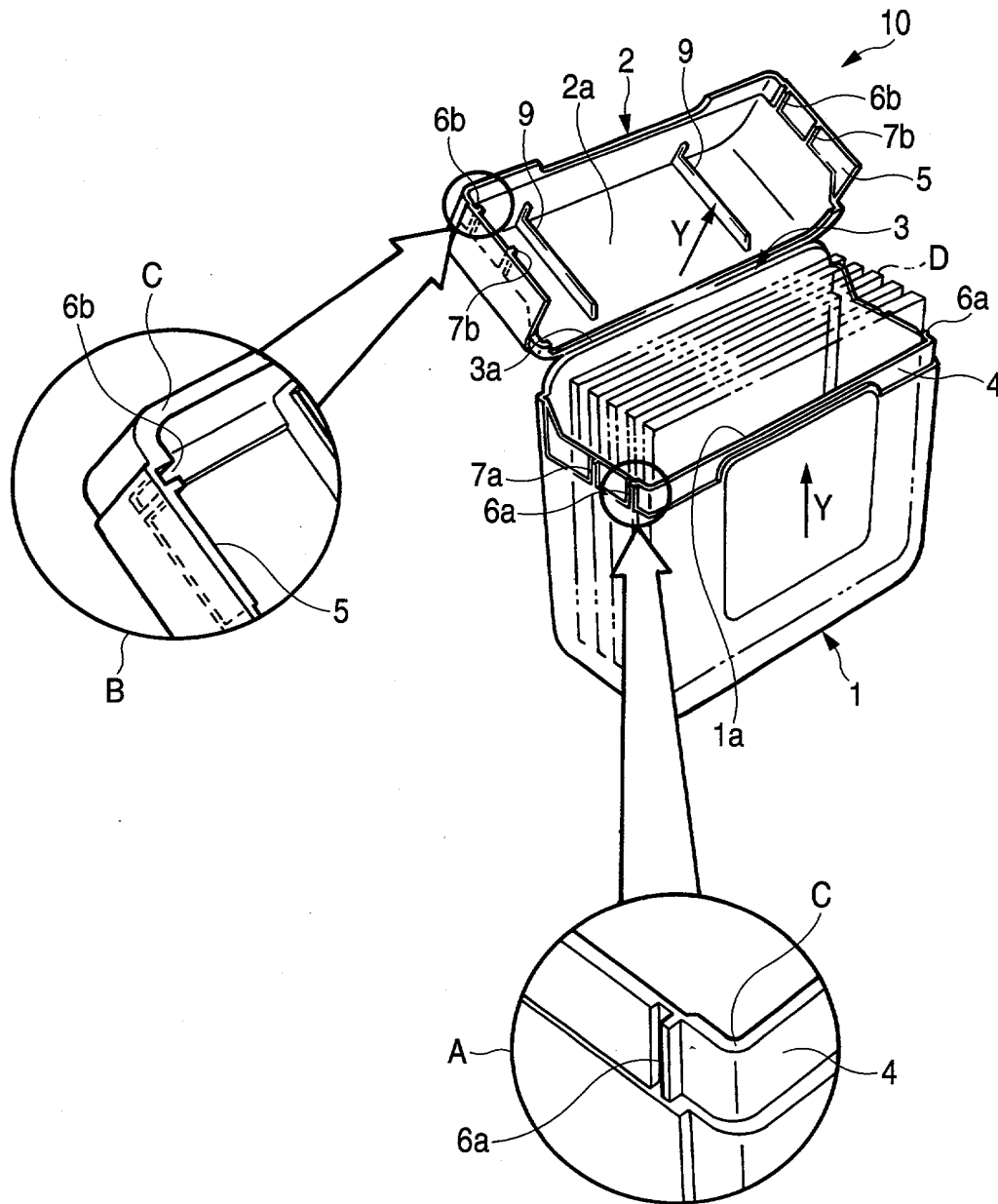


FIG. 2

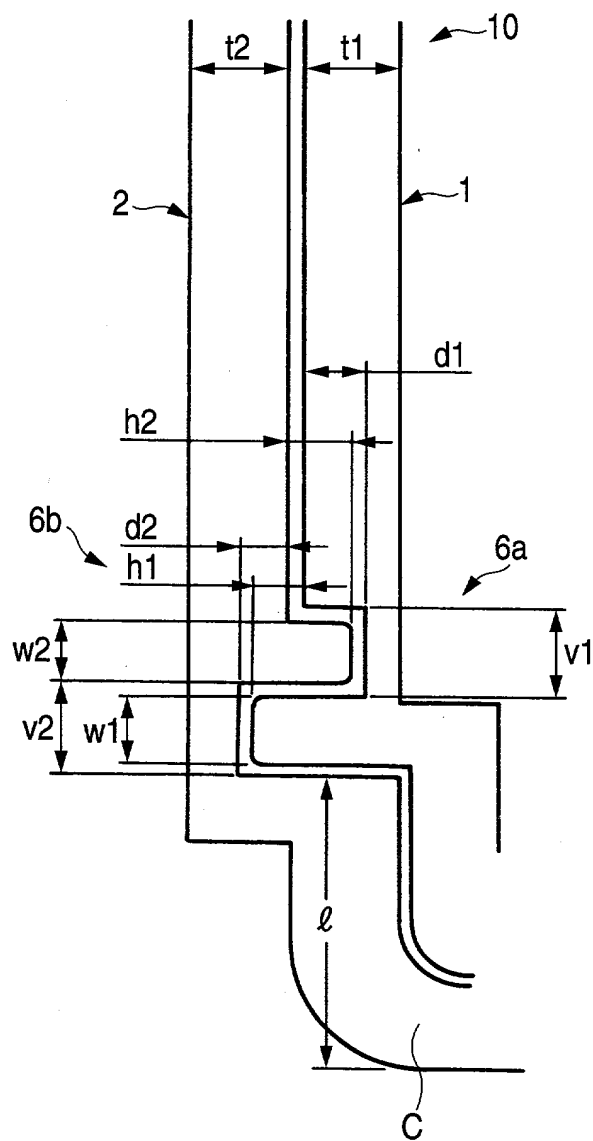


FIG. 3 (L)

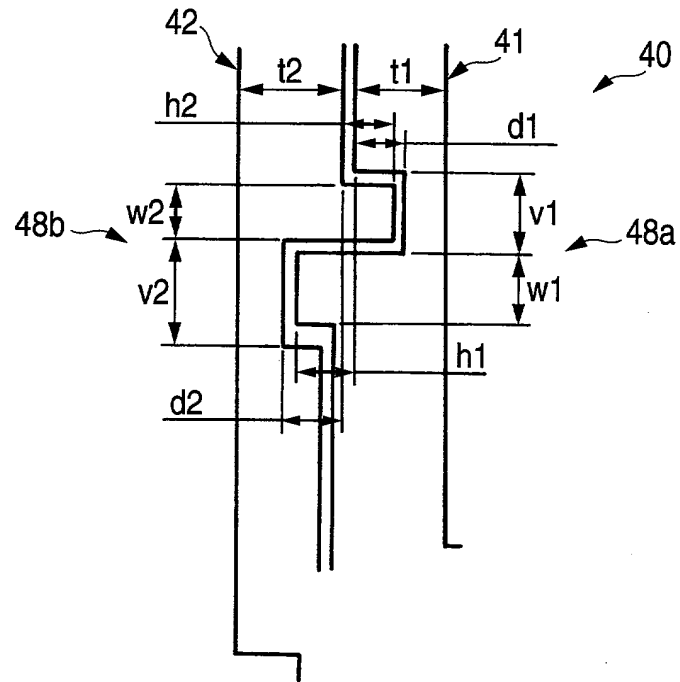


FIG. 3 (R)

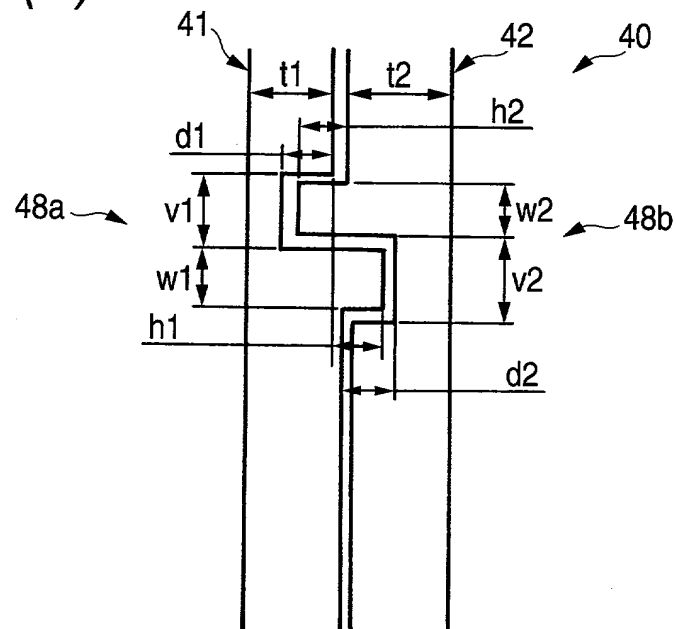
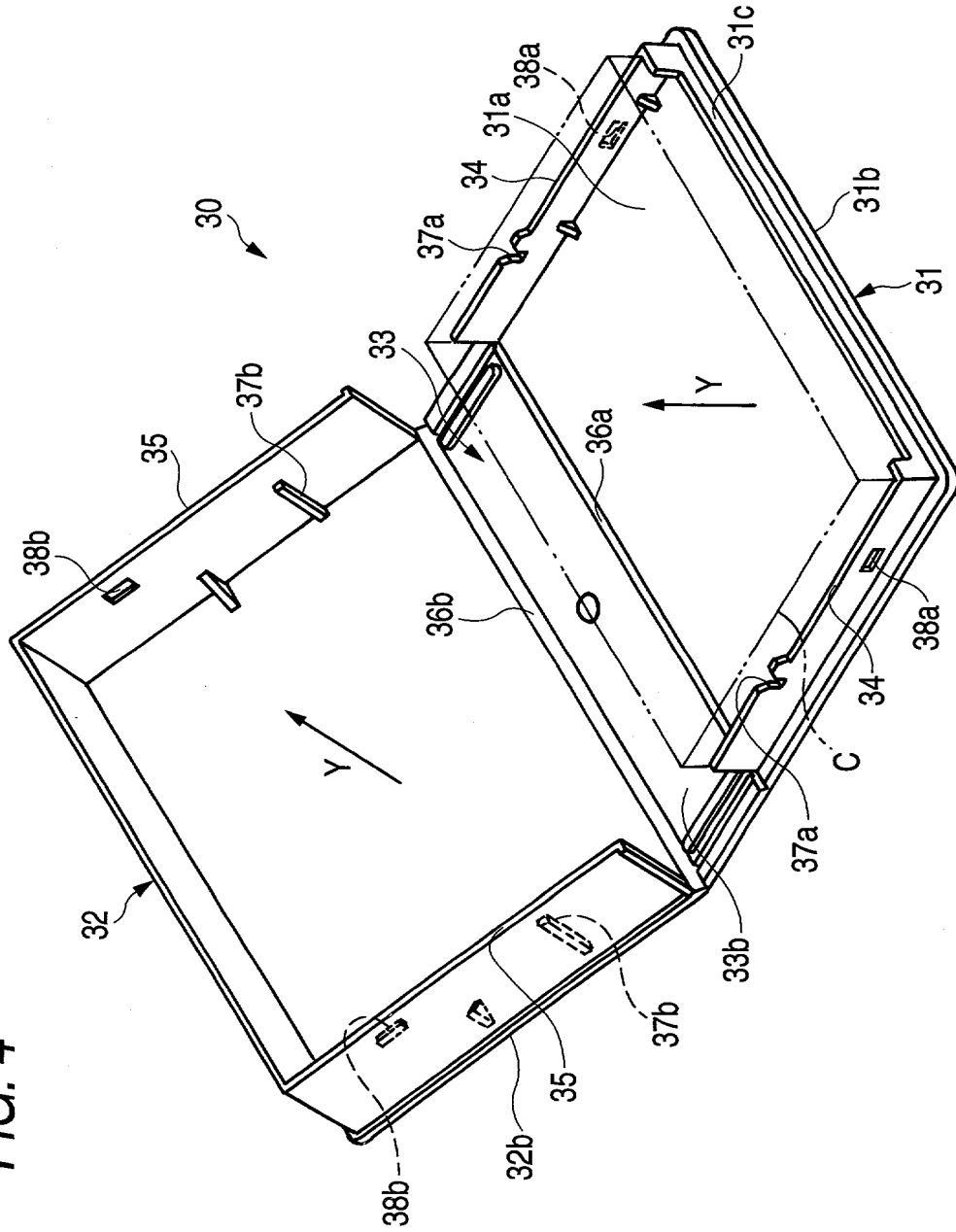
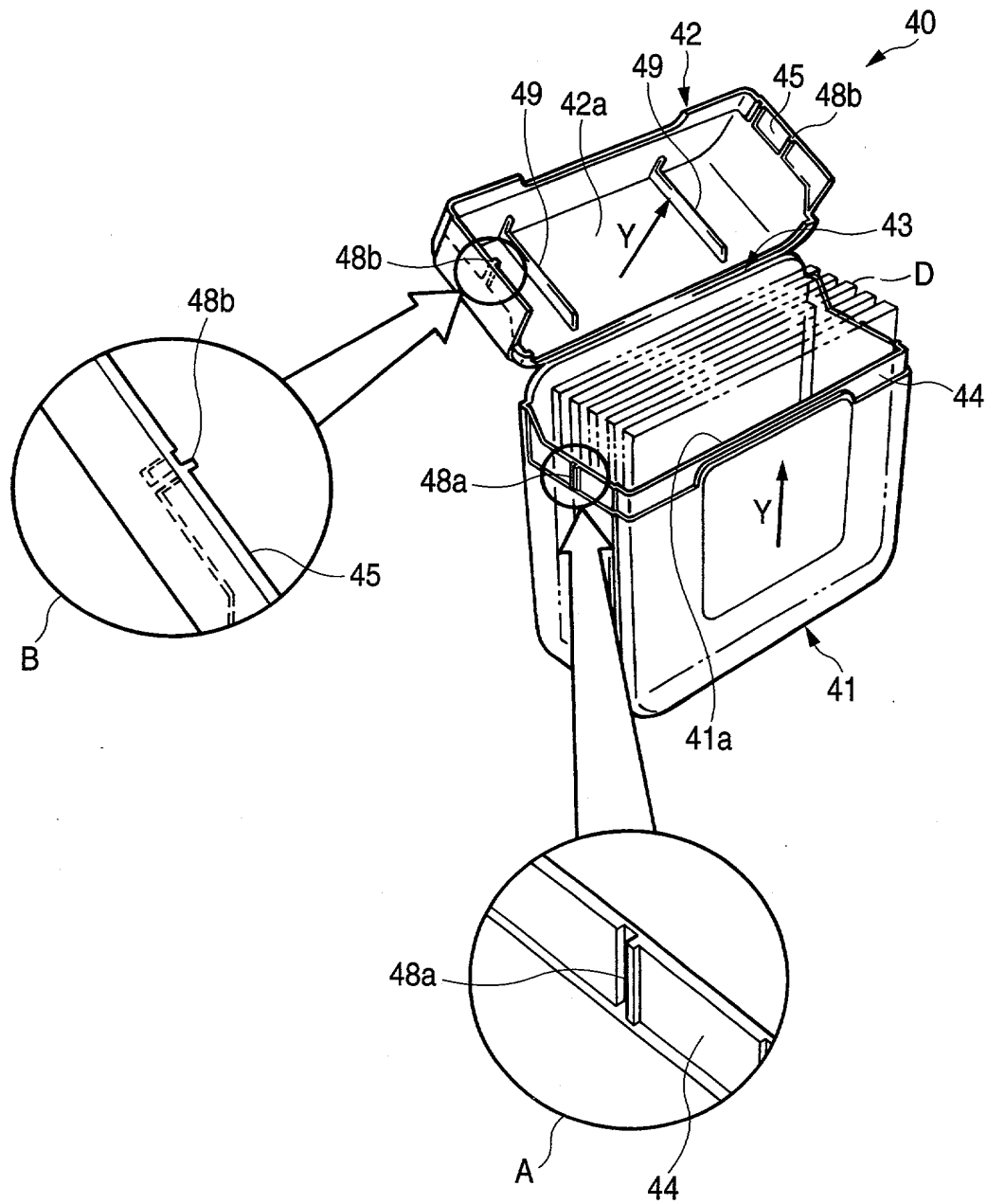


FIG. 4



5/5

FIG. 5



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

CASE

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following box is checked:

☒ was filed on July 13, 2000 as United States Application Number or PCT International Application Number PCT/JP00/04710 and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information of which is material to the patentability as defined in 37 CFR § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or § 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or § 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority Not Claimed

P. Hei. 11-203279

Japan

16/07/1999

☐

(Number)

(Country)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

(Number)

(Country)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

☐

(Number)

(Country)

(Day/Month/Year Filed)

☐

I hereby claim the benefits under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

(Application Number)

(Filing Date)

I hereby claim the benefits under 35 U.S.C. § 120 of any United States application(s), or § 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application.

(Application Number)

(Filing Date)

(Status - patented, pending, abandoned)

(Application Number)

(Filing Date)

(Status - patented, pending, abandoned)

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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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